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# Selected Speeches and News Releases

May 12 - May 19, 1988

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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

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## USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, May 12—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, May 13, through 12:00 midnight Thursday, May 19.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is less than the 1987-crop base quality loan rate of 52.25 cents per pound, the loan repayment rate for 1987-crop upland cotton during this period is equal to the AWP adjusted for the specific quality and location. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. No coarse count adjustment will be applicable during the period because the adjustment is less than 1.00 cent per pound.

Because the loan repayment rate is less than the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo loan eligibility on their 1987-crop upland cotton. The payment rate will equal the difference between the loan rate and the loan repayment rate in effect during the week in which the cotton is sold. Payment will be made on the quantity of 1987-crop upland cotton otherwise eligible for loan, not to exceed a quantity determined by multiplying the individual farm program acreage by the farm program payment yield. All loan deficiency payments will be made in cash. Applications for loan deficiency payments must be filed by not later than May 31, 1988.

Based on data for the week ending May 12, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:



Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price .....	64.06
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location .....	9.51
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton .....	2.00
Average U.S. location .....	0.44
Sum of Adjustments .....	<u>-11.95</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE .....	52.11 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price .....	64.06
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price .....	<u>-57.92</u>
	6.14
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton .....	<u>-6.25</u>
	-0.11
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT .....	0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made May 19.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954  
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## FOREST SERVICE PROPOSES CHANGES IN APPEALS PROCESS

WASHINGTON, May 13—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing changes in the process that allows the public to appeal decisions made by national forest officials.

“We reviewed the current regulation and found that we needed to streamline, simplify, expedite and eliminate confusion in the appeals process,” said F. Dale Robertson, chief of USDA’s Forest Service.

The proposal separates appeals on permits with the Forest Service to use or to occupy National Forest System lands from appeals involving objections to land and resource management planning and project implementation decisions.

Currently, all appellants use the same process. They can obtain a review of a forest officer’s decision at two higher levels of authority. For example, a district ranger’s decision can be appealed to the forest

supervisor and then to the regional forester. The decision can be changed at either of the levels.

Under the proposal, both types of appeals would be given a streamlined, one-level review at the next administrative level, with discretion for further review at one more level. Appeals involving special use permits would retain many of the features of the current rule. Contractual disputes would not be subject to either rule.

“Our appeals process is a valuable way to review key decisions, but it has been abused and had become too slow and too costly a tradeoff that impeded land and resource management activities,” Robertson said. He indicated the proposal encourages comment regarding the payment of filing fees to discourage abuse of the appeals process.

If the proposed rules are adopted, the Forest Service will monitor how well Deciding Officers and Reviewing Officers meet deadlines and prompt action will be taken to remedy excessive delays in processing of appeals, Robertson said.

The proposal will be published in the May 16 Federal Register. Comments on the proposal must be received in writing by July 15 and should be sent to F. Dale Robertson, Chief (1570), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

For further information contact Larry Hill, 202-382-9349, or Kathryn Hauser, 202-382-9346.

Rose Narlock (202) 475-3778

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES 1988 WOOL AND MOHAIR SUPPORT PRICES**

WASHINGTON, May 13—Support prices for wool and mohair for 1988 marketings will be \$1.78 per pound for shorn wool and \$4.69 per pound for mohair, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official announced today.

Milton Hertz, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said shorn wool payments will be based on a percentage of each producer's return from shorn wool sales. The payment rate is the percentage which, when applied to the sales proceeds, raises the national average price received by all producers for shorn wool in 1988 up to the support price of \$1.78 per pound.

Mohair payments will be calculated in a manner similar to shorn wool in order to maintain approximately the same percentage of parity for mohair as for shorn wool. Mohair is being supported at 85 percent of the percentage of parity at which shorn wool is supported.

Hertz said pulled wool will be supported at a level comparable to the support price for shorn wool in order to maintain normal marketing practices for pulled wool.

Further details will be published in the Federal Register later.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

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## **USDA ISSUES FINAL RULE ON NOTIFYING SUSPECTED VIOLATORS OF MEAT ACT**

WASHINGTON, May 13—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued a final rule requiring USDA to notify suspected violators of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) that evidence is being referred to the U.S. Department of Justice for possible criminal prosecution, and defining the five types of cases in which USDA will not provide prior notice.

According to the rule, USDA can proceed with criminal prosecutions without giving prior notice when there is the possibility (1) that evidence could be destroyed or altered, (2) that the suspected violator might flee to avoid prosecution, or (3) that covert operations or other investigations might be compromised. USDA also can waive prior notice in cases of (4) suspected bribery or clandestine slaughtering or meat-processing operations, or (5) in cases involving suspected violations of laws other than the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

The Processed Products Inspection Improvement Act of 1986 requires USDA to give notice to suspected violators of the FMIA and also gives USDA the authority to establish exemptions to the requirement.

“To protect investigations underway when the new law went into effect, USDA issued an interim rule on April 27, 1987, and provided a public comment period,” said Lester M. Crawford, administrator of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service. “This interim rule has now been adopted without change.”

Two comments on the interim rule were received from industry organizations. In response to one, Crawford said that the discovery of



meat inspection violations in many cases is incidental to broader investigations. “Providing prior notice in these circumstances could endanger the prosecution by parties other than USDA of violations unrelated to the Meat Act,” he said.

In response to the second comment, Crawford said that the 1986 law was appropriate in providing no mechanism for judicial review in cases where an exception to prior notice was invoked. “Going into court each time we needed to invoke an exception would endanger investigations, and the creation of a regulatory route for invoking exceptions was intended by Congress in writing the law.”

The final rule was published today in the Federal Register.

USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service inspects meat products going into interstate commerce to ensure safety, wholesomeness and accuracy of labels.

Hedy Ohringer (202) 447-9113

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## **USDA ASKS FOR WAIVER OF COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE FOR FARMERS**

WASHINGTON, May 16—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today filed a request with the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation to exempt drivers of farm vehicles from certain testing and licensing requirements of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986.

According to Martin F. “Buzz” Fitzpatrick Jr., administrator of USDA’s Office of Transportation, drivers of farm vehicles are not commercial drivers. “Compared to non-farm drivers, they drive shorter distances, fewer total miles and have a lower rate of involvement in fatal accidents,” he said. “The minimal risk presented by these drivers does not justify the burden that would be imposed on them or on enforcement officials if all the provisions of the Act were to be enforced.”

Fitzpatrick said the 1986 law requires that the driver of a commercial vehicle with a gross weight over 26,000 pounds (1) have a single driver’s license with a single driving record, (2) be tested for the type of vehicle driven, and (3) be required to notify his employer and home state of any traffic violations. Regulations to implement the law are currently under consideration by DOT.

“We have filed with DOT a recommendation that a waiver be granted to farm drivers from the licensing and testing requirements of the CMVSA,” Fitzpatrick said. “Such action would not diminish the safe operation of commercial vehicles and would not be contrary to the public interest.”

He pointed out that the Act specifically gives the Secretary of Transportation authority to waive any class of drivers or vehicles from any or all of the provisions of the Act or the implementing regulations.

To determine the impact of requiring farmers to obtain commercial drivers licenses, OT recently completed a survey of representative sample of wheat, corn and cattle producers. “These studies basically showed that farm trucks as a class tend to be driven fewer miles than other trucks,” Fitzpatrick said.

“Similarly,” he continued, “our examination of accident data shows that an extremely small percentage of trucks involved in fatal accidents are farm trucks.”

In its filing, OT defined a farm vehicle driver as a person who drives only a motor vehicle that is (1) controlled or operated by a farm family; (2) used to transport agricultural products, farm machinery or farm supplies to or from a farm; (3) not used in the operations of a contract carrier; and (4) used only occasionally to carry hazardous materials in an amount necessary to operate the farm or ranch.

Paul Kepler (202) 653-6068

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## TEST FOR PLANT VIRUSES AVAILABLE SOON

WASHINGTON, May 17—A new diagnostic probe which detects at least 35 distinct plant viruses, some of which can lower the market value of a vegetable or ornamental by 75 percent, will be on the market in a couple of years, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said today.

Ramon L. Jordan of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, a co-developer of the test, said it is a monoclonal antibody probe that detects potyviruses, named for potato virus Y. Protein from the viruses was injected into mice whose spleen cells were subsequently used to develop cloned hybrid cells that produce the unique antibody used for the probe.

Agdia, Inc., of Mishawaka, Ind., is using the antibody to develop a commercial kit to detect potyviruses in seeds or plants, said Jordan. The



kits will first be sold to researchers and then to seed companies, growers, food processors and private firms and government agencies that certify seeds and plants as disease-free.

Jordan and colleague John Hammond of the Florist and Nursery Crops Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., developed the potyvirus-specific antibody. They have applied for a patent.

“The antibody binds to the coating of all potyviruses we’ve tested so far, over 65 isolates, making it the first to detect such a broad spectrum of plant viruses,” Jordan said. Potyviruses stunt, wilt, kill, or lower fruit production for a wide range of crops worldwide.

“Right now, tests detect only a single virus or a few closely related strains, and those tests have to be run one at a time,” said Jordan, a plant pathologist.

According to Jordan, there are about 38 definitive potyviruses and at least 60 more that may prove to be in this group. He said affected plants can include beans, beets, celery, clover, corn, lettuce, onions, papaya, peanuts, peas, peppers, plums, potatoes, soybeans, sugarcane, tobacco, turnips, watermelon, wheat, yams, zucchini and other crops. Many flowers such as irises, gladiolus, lilies and tulips are also susceptible.

Roger H. Lawson, the laboratory’s research leader, said, “Unless seeds are certified as disease free, a potyvirus such as lettuce mosaic virus can greatly reduce yields. Just a few infected seeds can ruin a whole crop.”

Lawson said that seed testing is increasingly important to the industry. All lettuce seed, for example, is tested with a conventional rabbit serum antibody kit for lettuce mosaic virus.

“This new monoclonal antibody kit will provide a sensitive method for testing seed for potyviruses,” he said. “The kit could also be used by nurseries to test vegetatively propagated plants before they are grown in large quantities.”

Sutula foresees a worldwide market for the kit and said Agdia will use the kit in their testing service.

He said the kit’s users would place extracts of seeds or plant tissue into wells on a small plastic plate. Then they would add a clear solution of the broad-spectrum antibodies which have been tagged with an enzyme that colors the liquid if a potyvirus is present.

Agdia may use eight other monoclonal antibodies, developed by Jordan and Hammond, Sutula said, for follow-up kits to identify a specific virus, strain or isolate within the potyvirus group.

Don Comis (301) 344-2773

## **USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES**

WASHINGTON, May 17—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 10.58 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 9.72 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 9.62 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 5.29 cents per pound.

Loan repayment rates for 1987-crop warehouse or farm-stored rice loans are the higher of the world prices or 50 percent of the loan rates.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, the estimated average world prices for 1987 crop rough rice are:

- long grain, \$6.37 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$6.05 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$5.86 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made May 24, 1988 at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

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## **USDA TO CONDUCT 1988 SUPPRESSION PROGRAM FOR BOLL WEEVIL IN THE SOUTHEAST**

WASHINGTON, May 18—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will work with cooperators in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina this spring and summer to suppress boll weevil populations in those states.

The suppression program will safeguard eradication gains made last fall and prevent reintroduction of the pest into already-eradicated areas of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, according to Larry B. Slagle, acting administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Slagle said the suppression program will use an environmentally sound integrated pest management approach combining sophisticated trapping techniques with cultural and chemical controls.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires evaluation of all major



federal actions such as the boll weevil program. APHIS has conducted an environmental assessment for this suppression program and has concluded that it will have no significant adverse environmental effects. APHIS also is preparing an environmental impact statement for all cooperative eradication efforts nationwide, according to Slagle.

Under a cooperative federal-state-industry program, boll weevil has been successfully eliminated from Virginia, North Carolina, and most of South Carolina—demonstrating the viability of such attempts. Insecticide use has dropped significantly in these areas, with positive environmental and economic results, Slagle said. In Virginia and North Carolina, for example, pesticide use on cotton has dropped about 77 percent because of the success of the boll weevil eradication program.

These successful preliminary programs have convinced APHIS to conduct a boll weevil suppression program in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

Boll weevil is the number-one insect pest of cotton, requiring more pesticidal control than any other agricultural insect pest in the United States. The need for control has climbed over the years as the pest has become more resistant to insecticides. In addition, boll weevil control escalates the need for expensive and environmentally disruptive pesticides by killing natural enemies of other cotton pests. Boll weevil has caused \$12 billion worth of damage to the U.S. cotton industry since its entry from Mexico in 1892 and continues to inflict damages of \$300 million annually upon U.S. producers in yield losses and control costs.

Nancy Robinson (202) 447-3861

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## **AGRICULTURE GRADUATES IN HIGH DEMAND AS NUMBERS DROP**

WASHINGTON, May 18—New college graduates with agricultural majors are enjoying the strongest job market in a decade, but their dropping numbers may foretell a coming shortage in critical food and agricultural specializations, report U.S. Department of Agriculture and college officials.

“This is the second consecutive year of increased demand for agriculture graduates after nearly a decade of reduced hiring,” says J. Patrick Jordan, administrator of USDA’s Cooperative State Research

Service. "The demand comes in part from recent advances in agricultural science and technology, and from the need of U.S. agribusiness to improve its position in international marketing."

That's good news for the current crop of agriculture graduates, who are entering a job market of increasing opportunities with starting salaries higher than at any time in the past.

Iowa State University, for example, reports 1988 starting salaries of graduates with bachelor's degrees in agriculture average just over \$20,000. The University of Georgia estimates average starting salaries near \$19,600 for students with bachelor's degrees, \$24,000 for those with master's and \$34,000 for those with doctoral degrees.

The University of California at Davis says the picture is bright for all food-science graduates, who will attract starting offers ranging on average from \$22,000 to \$36,000. Texas A&M agriculture graduates will start on average at \$17,000 to \$26,000. And Cornell University College of Agriculture expects starting salaries for its 1988 bachelor's of science graduates to increase 4 percent to 5 percent over the 1987 average of \$20,406.

Campus recruitment efforts of agriculture majors are up, too, with many businesses finding a shortage of new graduates to fill current openings. Particularly bright spots in the employment picture, say college officials, include food science, poultry production, agricultural education, agricultural chemistry and engineering, dairy science, agricultural journalism, entomology, landscape architecture and ornamental horticulture.

But the good news for today's graduates is troubling to USDA and college officials who view the trend from a long-term, national perspective. "Unfortunately," says Jordan, "even as demand picks up, the nation's supply of graduates in agriculture majors continues to diminish."

This year, for example, ISU graduated about 500 agriculture majors, down 35-40 from 1987; Purdue graduated 225, down from 301 a year ago. USDA's Human Resources Assessment Committee on Higher Education currently forecasts a continuing national shortage of 4,000 agriculture and life sciences graduates annually through 1990. Some experts predict the shortage will continue beyond that date, and that it will become more significant at higher educational levels as good starting salaries and career opportunities draw off bachelor of science graduates who might otherwise obtain master's or doctoral degrees.



“To a degree, the laws of supply and demand will no doubt enter into play here,” says Jordan, “so that more college students, seeing that the agricultural professions offer good career opportunities, will choose an agricultural major.”

“But,” Jordan cautions, “if college-bound Americans fail to perceive the promise and opportunities of careers in agriculture, then the nation may soon face a critical shortage of expertise in the food and agricultural sciences and professions.”

Patrick Casula (202) 447-7854

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USDA ANNOUNCES PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF 1988 FARM PROGRAM SIGNUP

WASHINGTON, May 19—Producers have signed contracts to place 187.8 million acres of feed grain, wheat, upland and extra-long staple (ELS) cotton and rice in the 1988 acreage limitation programs, according to a preliminary report issued today by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The acreage enrolled in 1988 commodity programs represents 83.4 percent of the 225.2 million acres of total crop acreage bases established for these commodities. For the 1987 programs, 86.5 percent of the 226.4 million acres of total crop acreage bases was enrolled.

The following table is a national summary of the enrollment report.

	Effective Base	Enrolled Base	Idled Base	0/92 50/92 <sup>1</sup>	Percent Enrolled
- - - - - (million acres) - - - - -					
Corn	83.4	72.5	20.9	(3.0)	86.9
Sorghum	17.0	13.8	4.1	(1.1)	81.3
Barley	12.6	9.9	2.9	(0.6)	78.3
Oats	8.0	2.4	0.3	(0.2)	30.2
Feed Grains	121.0	98.6	28.2	(4.9)	81.5

Wheat	85.3	72.6	22.8	(3.4)	85.2
Cotton - Upland	14.6	12.8	2.1	(0.5)	88.0
- ELS	0.1	0.01	0.001	-	10.2
Rice	4.2	3.8	1.1	(0.1)	92.1
Total	225.2	187.8	54.2	(8.9)	83.4

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<sup>1</sup>0/92 and 50/92 program acreage is included in the total crop acreage bases idled.

Producers who participate in the annual commodity programs agree to reduce their plantings from the established crop acreage bases by at least 20 percent for corn, sorghum and barley, 5 percent for oats, 27.5 percent for wheat, 12.5 percent for upland cotton, 10 percent for ELS cotton and 25 percent for rice.

In addition, producers of corn, sorghum and barley had the option of further reducing their plantings by 10 percent by participating in a paid land diversion program. Under this option, 4.1 million acres will be diverted, including 3.2 million of corn acreage.

Participating producers will be eligible for program benefits, including Commodity Credit Corporation price support loans and purchases and deficiency payments. In addition, at the time they enrolled in the programs, producers had the option of requesting 40 percent of their projected 1988 deficiency payments. One-half of this amount was paid in cash at signup and the balance will be paid in generic commodity certificates in the latter half of this month.

The optional diversion payment to corn, sorghum and barley producers will be paid entirely in generic commodity certificates this month also.

A final report of total acreage enrollment and 0/92 and 50/92 enrollment will be issued later.

Signup for the 1988 feed grain, wheat, cotton and rice programs began Feb. 16 and ended April 15.

Printed copies of the tables can be obtained from the USDA, Office of Information, New Division-Room 403-A, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Telephone: (202) 447-4026. Ask for press release 649-88.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6789

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